Employment practices review

From:
Sent: 11 May 2017 16:02
To: Employment practices review
Subject: Employment Practice in the Modern Economy

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Re: Opportunities for under-represented groups

I wish to submit the following:

Issues concerning particular groups in the demographic spectrum need to be addressed as a matter of priority in any review of modern employment practice:

1. high/ disguised (i.e. recent graduates in unskilled jobs) under employment/unemployment levels among the under 30s, coupled with decreasing birth rates;

2. the lack of incentives for families with children to progress from low level/ casual unskilled employment supplemented by working tax credits to higher level employment where they end up virtually no better off;

3. increasing pressure/ uncertainty for the 30-50s 'middle' level workforce as a result of work intensification and the 'threat' of their roles being taken over by robots;

4. the uncertain labour market consequences of Brexit in respect of the loss of EU workers, particularly in sectors such as IT/ finance/ hospitality/ health and social care and agriculture;

5. under-utilisation of the increasing older and 60+ workforce, particularly those with previous high level skilled/ middle management/ professional backgrounds.

It is on the latter (5th) category on which I wish to focus my comments.

Although government statistics indicate that an increasing number of those aged 65+ are in employment, apart from the well-publicised 'B & Q' type jobs, this increase is probably as a result of individuals deciding to remain in their current employ for a variety of reasons, rather than retire. Circumstantial evidence would, however, indicate that it is still extremely difficult for those in this age group who wish to re-enter the workplace to do so, despite age discrimination legislation and the end of the Default Retirement Age. There are indications that there could be as many as up to several million, mainly hidden "economically inactive" older people, some of whom would in fact be willing to work providing the right sort of jobs were available. Given that many have valuable skills currently going to waste, this represents a challenge to employers and businesses to make use of them. It is also too often assumed that this age group should simply be satisfied with volunteer roles, which are socially invaluable.

The 2010-15 coalition government started some positive initiatives as part of their Fuller Working Lives programme which was ably spearheaded by Dr Ros Altmann. In addition, there have been a number of comprehensive reports and articles on the topic, in particular by (i) Dr Chris Ball (formerly of TAEN) now a specialist adviser on the ageing workforce, (ii) the Centre for Ageing Better and Business in the Community and (iii) Matthew Tinsley of the Policy Exchange: "Too Much to Lose". These and other related research demonstrate emphatically the pressing business and social case for action in respect of the various groups which comprise the older workforce. I would urge you to take the advice of these experts

Whilst all five elements outlined above need to be part of your present considerations, I ask that you do not ignore the potential of the older workforce in your current employment considerations.

11 May 2017

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